

17 January 2022

To: Montgomery County Council

Re: Public Hearing on Vaccine Mandate for Entry into Facilities

Please accept my brief written testimony for the council session tomorrow.

I am a physician and bioethicist, and a resident of Montgomery Council. I feel it is not in the best interest of Country residents and businesses to require proof of vaccination to enter public facilities. Why?

In the first place, our county already has a very high vaccination rate, and adding this administrative burden to businesses will accomplish very little but bring added hassles and costs.

More importantly, though, the science does not support this type of regulation. COVID can be and is spread by both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. The currently-available vaccines work well to prevent serious illness and death, but to not prevent infection, viral replication, and contagiousness nearly as well. This was already true with the earlier viral variants but is increasingly true with newer variants such as Omicron. The marginally lower infection rate in vaccinated individuals is at least partly (and perhaps to a greater extent) offset by the fact that they are more likely to not get sick, and thus are more likely to be asymptomatic carriers.

The science supports the current County practice of mask mandates that are tied to the current disease prevalence. The logical course of action is to require the masks and, perhaps in health care facilities and other high risk areas, require testing for BOTH vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals when disease burden is high.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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